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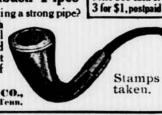
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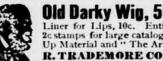


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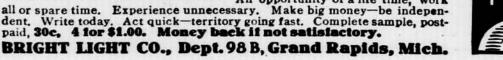
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Continued from page 7

our score will be paid. I shall not miss you, Beatrice; and I shall not miss myself only to glance round—and I should die. afterward.

"I was afraid that he would hear me

"'Mercy!' she screamed in a low whisper.

Mercy!

"'Be quiet!' he commanded. "She was quiet, very quiet. It was I who couldn't do it! almost screamed. I held myself for fear my "'A little lo trembling should be audible.

If I could have got straight over him, I might the love of Heaven! You used to care for have dropped a chair or a heavy box on his mehead. I thought of that; but he stood, not under the balcony, but at the foot of the shot: but the thought of the revolver seemed to paralyze me, and I could not move. I dug my nails into my flesh; but that did not make me move. My senses seemed asleep. I did not even hear what they said for a out her arms as if to fend off my blow.

"It's a play!' she cried. 'We're rehearstime, though I saw that they were speaking; but at last her voice broke in upon me, as if ing a play!'

I had suddenly awoke.

"I didn't believe her at first; but when I

young! I don't want to die! I-don't-

want-to-die!

SUPPOSE nobody is such a coward that coward's stairs. nothing will stir him to risk his wretched self down the stairs, just to be shot; but I Surely you know that? wanted to save her. I forced myself to think. "I remembered that

end of those nine minutes she was to die. If if every whit of memory had not fled from find some weapon and go down stealthily name was Evelyn. and try to catch him unawares. Even if he have a chance to escape while he killed me. a coward's stairs to the end. I fainted. She was nearly as quick as he. I looked round and saw some golf clubs standing in a corner of the corridor. I crept to them and There were only six minutes left, when I a coward before them all.

"I ended as I'd begun,—ran away like a came to the top of the stairs.

always came in my mind instead. I imagined wasn't a coward. a betraying look on her face, or perhaps she screamed at the sight of me, and then he turned, and the revolver blazed. I tried to picture myself missed and rushing on and are a brave man. Take a nip of brandy. felling him; but instead I saw the four aces blotted out one after the other-snip-snip

death! then counted. Twenty-three more!

"'Death!' she repeated and shivered. She hands. That was why she did not see me.

"I took another step—twenty-two more! If she did not look up and scream, he would love for a woman. not be likely to see me till I turned the cor-

ner, at any rate. Twenty-one!
"Death! The word seemed to reecho in If he should hear!

asked. Under cover of his voice I took an- me a coward, he can propose a test on equal

"'Give me a chance,' she begged, 'just a

little chance! "He laughed. The laugh covered another step. 'A tiny chance! You were always-

a-a sport!' He laughed almost aloud; and I took two steps more. Fifteen! "'I am a woman, only a woman!'

"'I wish,' he said, 'that you were a man!

the ground. "She sobbed. I went on. Fourteen! I was That was his name. The telegram said this: at the corner now; and if he looked round-How quickly he hit those four aces—snip snip—snip—snip!

"She sobbed again. Thirteen! He had

"'If you were a man,' he said-his voice was worse than brutal-devilish, animal,-'I'd do more than shoot you!'

"Twelve! Death was such a fearful thing -the darkness-and what? I followed my coffin in imagination, and my soul-I

"'A little longer!' she pleaded. 'I am embling should be audible. afraid!' Eleven! 'For mercy's sake! I am "What was I to do? What could I do? afraid!' Ten! 'I am afraid!' Nine! 'For

"'Silence!' he said. 'One minute more!' "She flung up her hands and lifted her stairs. If I went down he would shoot me as eyes-and saw me! Eight! She screamed well as her. I knew I ought to go and be and pointed, and he faced round to me. I raised the club and rushed down upon him. For that one moment I wasn't a coward!

"Run away!' I called to her. 'Run!' "She sprang between me and him, holding

"I am so young!' she pleaded. 'So saw his face I knew it was true. If he had' laughed, I shouldn't have believed her; but

> he was trying not to laugh! "I stood swaying on the last step of the

"'Don't you know?' she cried. 'It's the life. Her piteous voice stirred me. I de- theatricals tomorrow. Did you hear him cided that I would go to her, if I threw my- call me Beatrice? My real name is Evelyn.

"I remembered that there was to be a "It was now nine minutes to two. At the play, and they were hero and heroine. And I could not save her, I must die too. I must fright I must have remembered that her

I dropped the club. She laughed sudheard me and turned my way, she would denly-shrieked with laughter. They were

WHEN I came to I was lying on my bed. They had carried me there and left selected one. I took off my slippers to walk me. The door was open. I heard laughter quietly over the thick carpet, hoping to sur- from below; her laugh and his among the prise him from behind, as he stood back to others. The rest had returned, and of course the stairs. I thought it all out, to the ac- they were telling them of my ludicrous atcompaniment of her pleading for life. Her tack, like some ignorant peasant who invoice seemed to draw me toward her, and vades the stage to rescue the heroine. That my fears seemed to draw me back. Her wasn't the worst. I had not been merely voice prevailed slowly, very slowly. If I had ridiculous. I had been so 'frighted by false not been a coward, I must have run to her. fires' that I had fainted. I was written down

"You will think me a coward of cowards. coward; dressed and crept down a side stairlingered there for a whole minute. My case, and out of a side door. I remembered limbs would not move. I tried to picture this train. I ran through hedges and ditches. myself rushing on him and striking him I had the coward's courage to run, anddown before he turned; but another picture here I am. I suppose I'd shoot myself, if I

YOU aren't a coward," I pronounced when he had finished. "In your way you

"Dutch courage!" He laughed bitterly. "That's exactly where you make the mis--snip—snip! I counted the steps,—twenty-take, I said in my professional manner. four: ten to the turning, and fourteen be- "You set your courage too hard a task, and yond. I feel as if I shall go on counting then you abuse your courage! The bulk of them for the rest of my life-a coward's the deed is done by strength and skill. Courage tackles what's left. You leave yourself "'Five minutes more,' he said, 'and then too much. You wouldn't want courage to ride a horse, if you'd learned to ride. You'd "Death! I took one step down the stairs; be much less afraid of a marksman if you en counted. Twenty-three more! could shoot. Well, you had nothing but courage to take you down the stairs that you had sunk into a chair, and her face was in her call a coward's stairs tonight, and it took

"It wasn't courage," he denied. "It was

"Can't that take you up some other stairs?" I suggested.

His face set like the face of a brave manmy mind and to freeze me still. I couldn't I know the look. "I was a coward to run move. She gave a faint sob, and that sent away," he cried. "I'll go back again in the me a step forward. Twenty! Nineteen! morning. I'll tell them that I was unnerved I heard my own step even on the soft carpet. by the struggle I had with myself, and by my fear of their laughter, and that I have come "'Have you anything more to say?' he back to be laughed at, and if anyone thinks terms."

"Yes," I said; "but don't lay too much stress on the last part. They are English ladies and gentlemen, and they'll laugh very kindly, I think. There is a humorous side to it, you know. I'm glad to have met you. Come and see me when you're back in town. We're going to be friends.

He washed, and I got a brush out of my Then I wouldn't just shoot you.' He snarled bag and tidied him up, and lent him a cap. like an angry dog. My cowardly limbs were He looked quite bright when we reached numb again. 'I wish you were a man!' he town; and then we had a rather pretty adrepeated. His voice seemed to root me to dition to this story. A porter came along the train with a telegram, "name of Hastie."

> We haven't given you away and sha'n't. Said you had a wire. Aunt ill. Both admire your plucky intentions. E. wishes to say her